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*Apostolic Preaching,
a Sermon by Cluzoni.*

1842

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The Rev. Mr. Clulow with his family
and wife
APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

A SERMON

DELIVERED IN THE

WESLEYAN CENTENARY CHAPEL,

BOSTON,

February 6th, 1842,

BY JOHN CLULOW,

Wesleyan Minister.

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IN the present day, it is the duty of faithful ministers of Christ especially to give prominence to the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, "CHRIST CRUCIFIED." With this view, the writer of this Discourse was led to consider the great subject of Apostolic Preaching; and, in the regular course of ministerial duty, brought it before his hearers. He never intended the Sermon for the press, but as the members of the Leaders' Meeting unanimously requested its publication, he felt bound to submit to their judgment and wishes. If it is rendered subservient to the promotion of God's glory, and the extension of Christ's kingdom, his design will be fully accomplished.

BOSTON, FEB. 15, 1842.

Wes. 918

SERMON.

II COR. CH. IV. VER. 5.

“FOR WE PREACH NOT OURSELVES, BUT CHRIST JESUS THE LORD; AND OURSELVES YOUR SERVANTS FOR JESUS’ SAKE.”

MANY schemes have been devised to raise the moral character of man, but no policy, no wisdom, no moral system, save that of the Gospel of the blessed God, has ever succeeded in the work of human regeneration. The wise men of antiquity hoped to arrive at the knowledge of God, and the worship which he required, by human sagacity and wisdom. But the notions they formed of the Supreme Being, and the service they prescribed for him, were absurd and useless. “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” The unity and spirituality of God were lost sight of in their speculations; gross darkness overspread the minds of men; and polytheism or idolatry, with superstition and cruelty, almost universally prevailed. Every system of religion, the invention of man, which the world has known, in ancient or modern times, whilst professing to solve the important question, “What must we do to be saved?” has proved that “the world by wisdom knew not God,” and been a broken staff, “whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it.” The Gospel of Christ, and that only, has eased the troubled conscience—reconciled the sinner to his God

—washed away the impurities of his nature—and fitted his spirit for the paradise of God. The publication of this Gospel, too, which was at first spoken by the Lord, has been constituted the grand instrumentality for the salvation of man. “After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

If, therefore, the Gospel of Christ is the word of our salvation, and the preaching of that Gospel is the appointed means of moral illumination and regeneration, how important is it that it should be faithfully delivered, fully described, and urgently pressed upon the attention of man! How necessary to give the different parts of it their relative position, to dwell upon them as their relative importance demands, to place Christ as the sun in the system, giving light, beauty, and life to the whole! How essential to make this saving scheme so plain that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein! But, alas! there always have been, and still are, unfaithful stewards of the mysteries of godliness—men who teach “things they ought not for filthy lucre’s sake”—men who use “the enticing words of man’s wisdom,” to court a pitiable popularity—men who love to have the preeminence, and “walk in craftiness, handling the word of God deceitfully.” Let those, however, who have intruded into the priest’s office, for fame, or power, or gain, know that their judgment “lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.” There appears to be abroad in the present day, in certain quarters, such a love of power, that the means of grace are more insisted upon than grace itself, as making us meet for heaven—that the power of the Church is more published than the power of Christ to save sinners—that the servant of Jesus to the church is more magnified than his master—that attention to ceremonies is more preached than Christ,

the great end of ceremonies. It is now published on the house tops that the efficacy of sacraments depends on the person who administers them, and not on their divine institution, or the disposition of the receiver—that tradition is of equal authority with the word of God—that all who are introduced to the work of the ministry by any but a certain mode are impostors—that none but episcopally-ordained priests are qualified to expound the Scriptures—and that the power of remitting or retaining sins is vested in the priesthood. These are the favorite doctrines and topics of discourse of a numerous class in the present day ; and they are so zealous in preaching themselves, and their privileges, that little time or thought is devoted to preaching “ Christ crucified.” Preaching of this character will never save the world : it will only mislead the ignorant and unstable, and bring swift destruction on those who practise it. It is not the Gospel of Christ, but “ another gospel.” “ But though we, or an angel from heaven, says St. Paul, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

Considering the awful consequences, to ourselves as well as to those who hear us, of perverting the gospel of Christ, of setting up our own opinions as the essence of evangelical truth, and so publishing “ another gospel,” it behoves us to ponder well what is gospel preaching, what was the theme of the apostles’ ministry. The apostles were immediately instructed in the nature of their office by Christ himself, they were extraordinarily gifted for the work of the ministry, and the Lord worked with them, “ confirming their word with signs following.” As we consider no Christianity genuine but such as prevailed in the primitive church—no duties or institutions obligatory on us but those which were observed by the first Christians, we ought not to regard any teaching as

evangelical but such as corresponds with that of the apostles of our Lord. To the matter of their discourses, and the position they claimed in the church of God, St. Paul draws our attention in the text. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

First, then, we observe, that the Apostles "preached not themselves." The great philosophers of Greece set up various schools of learning, to teach their peculiar tenets, and gave their own names to the moral doctrines taught in those seminaries. They might truly be said to preach themselves to their pupils, as they claimed the credit of forming their systems of morality, and because the system of philosophy which prevailed in each school bore the name of its founder for centuries. Not so, however, the apostles of our Lord. They did not set themselves forth as "some great ones," the originators of a school of moral philosophy, to whom belonged the honour of introducing and establishing Christianity in the world. The religion they taught was founded by Jesus Christ, their great and divine Master; they were his disciples, publishing his doctrines, enforcing his precepts, establishing his authority, and seeking his honour. They sought not their own glory, but the glory of Him that sent them. They were jealous of robbing Him of his peculiar prerogatives, and of the Churches praising them rather than their great Master.

It seems that certain teachers crept into the Corinthian Church, using all the arts of language to establish sects among them. The spirit of party was soon visible, but St. Paul immediately set himself to destroy it. "It hath been declared unto me, (he writes,) my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you, Now this I say that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the

name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.".... "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." Again we find St. Paul disclaiming all credit for bringing the Christian Corinthians to God, abasing himself to exalt the mighty power of God. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Though he was an honoured instrument in the establishment and confirmation of the Corinthian Church, he would not avail himself of sectarian bigotry, or the blandishments of eloquence, to aggrandize himself, but gave all the honour of his work to God: "Who then," he inquires, "is Paul? and who is Apollos? but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." And as "he that planteth and he that watereth are one,"—as each succeeds in his work, "according to the grace of God which is given unto him,"—as "every man" who labours in the word and doctrine "shall receive his own reward according to his own labour"—as no ministers are the efficient cause of the conversion of sinners, however useful they may be as instruments, the apostle discountenanced an undue appreciation of men and means, a preference of one minister to the disparagement of another, a glorying in men rather than God, who alone wrought by them. "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are

yours, (as instruments); whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

Yet surely, my brethren, no men had ever greater opportunities of magnifying themselves, no men ever did more mighty works to excite public approbation and superstitious reverence of themselves, no men ever encountered more pleasing temptations to human pride and vain-glory—than the apostles of our Lord. But they were spiritually armed against such potent temptations, and remained true to their principle, "to preach not themselves." When the lame beggar at the Beautiful gate of the temple was restored at the bidding of Peter, and entered the temple, "walking, and leaping, and praising God," all the people ran together unto them, "greatly wondering." What a favourable opportunity was this for self-gratulation! What a propitious moment for acting the impostor, and setting forth his own supernatural powers! But mark how careful Peter was to give God the glory—to preach not himself, "but Christ Jesus his Lord." While the people stood, "filled with wonder and amazement," at the miracle, Peter said, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers, hath glorified his son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know." Peter, at the instance of the Spirit, went to Cornelius to show him what he ought to do; and on his entering the house of the centu-

rion, Cornelius fell at Peter's feet, and worshipped him. "But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man." On entering the city of Lystra, Paul and Barnabas healed a cripple; and when the people saw what was done, "they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people." But the apostles received not honour from men; they did not arrogate the powers or honours due only to the Deity, as some would do in modern times. They "rent their clothes and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein." "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord."

In closing this branch of our subject, is it not incumbent upon us to say, that all those who preach the gospel should be jealous of setting forth anything of self in their discourses? Whilst every talent is called into exercise in our sacred calling, how careful should we be to display our Saviour, and to hide the instrument! Ostentatious parade of learning, talent, or personal influence, should have no place in the pulpit; but while we stand in the holy place, we should speak as men feeling that we set foot on holy ground, and "as the oracles of God." Deeply conscious should we be of our own nothingness, aware that "our sufficiency" for the setting forth of gospel truth, "is of God," and that, if any good be done by us in the earth, "the Lord doeth it." And how kindly affectioned one to another ought we, who have part in

this ministry, to be; "in honour preferring one another!" How anxious should we be to suppress all party feeling in the church of God, knowing that we who preach the everlasting Gospel are "labourers together with God," yet that "neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase!" Let us, who have been "put into the ministry," breathe the prayer of David, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins: let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."

But what shall we say of those who "seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's?" What shall we think of those who are in the priest's office, and yet "give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith?" Are not those ministers, who are always publishing their apostolic pedigree, the necessity of sacraments being administered only by themselves, and the heresy of all who differ from them in sentiment, strangely overlooking the business of "*a successor of the apostles*?" Are they not forgetting to preach Christ, and his salvation, in their extreme desire to maintain their own dignity and prerogatives? By fulminating their anathemas against the laborious servants of Christ—by dwelling on their own exclusive right to the priesthood—by "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," are they not furnishing the strongest proof that they are not "called of God?" Are they not making merchandise of souls, "treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?" . . . But we forbear. May God bring them to a better mind!

Secondly, We come to remark that the apostles preached Christ Jesus the Lord.

And, *first*, they proclaimed his nature and offices, as the Saviour of the world. It was a considerable part of their business to prove that He was "the Christ"—to show by reference to the Old Testament Scriptures, by comparing the predictions with the events of His life and death, by appeals to His mighty deeds, that He was "the true Messiah." "The ancient prophets had foretold that Messias should be God and Man, exalted and abased, Master and Servant, Priest and Victim, King and Subject, mortal and a conqueror of death, rich and poor, a king, a conqueror, glorious, yet a man of griefs, involved in our infirmities, in a state of great humiliation." The apostles, therefore, had to point out the union of these seeming contrarieties in the person of our Lord, to demonstrate that he was the Saviour of whom Moses and the prophets did write, to shew that all the types, promises, and prophecies centred in him. Hence they contended that Jesus Christ was "Immanuel," God with us—"made of the seed of David according to the flesh ; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Almost every discourse of the apostles adverted to the truth of his Divine mission. Peter's memorable sermon on the day of Pentecost was chiefly taken up with the proof of our Saviour's Messiahship, and was summed up with these positive words:—"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord and Christ*." When a great persecution scattered the disciples from Jerusalem, "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached *Christ* unto them." Immediately after his conversion, Paul "preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God ;" and we are told that "he confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ." Paul and

Silas coming to Thessalonica, found a synagogue of the Jews ; and “ Paul, as *his manner was*, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead ; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is *Christ*.” Apollos, “ an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures,” convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was *Christ*.” And there was a necessity for thus publishing the Messiahship of our Redeemer ; for if He were not the Christ to whom all the prophets gave witness, then might the world with the sceptical Jews look for another—then was *He* an impostor—then were his apostles false witnesses of God—then was their preaching vain, and all they which trusted in him perished. But, as they proved that he was the only “ Anointed” of God, and the only Saviour of a fallen world, they could urge men to believe in him for eternal life, declaring that “ there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” They could confidently say—

“ Jesus, transporting sound !
 The joy of earth and heaven ;
 No other help is found,
 No other name is given,
 By which we can salvation have ;
 But Jesus came the world to save.”

The apostles preached our Lord as a Saviour, under the name of “ Jesus.” When his conception was announced to his reputed father, the angel said, “ Thou shalt call his name *Jesus* ; for he shall save his people from their sins.” St. Paul, preaching at Antioch in Pisidia, observed, “ Of this man’s (David’s) seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, *Jesus*.” They proclaimed that Jesus came into the world to make peace between God and man ; to satisfy the claims of divine justice in our behalf, in our room

and stead ; to “suffer for sins, the just for the unjust ;” to “bear our sins in his own body on the tree”—“once in the end of the world having appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” They preached him as making himself an “offering for sin”—as saving us from the guilt and condemnation of sin ; and, by the power of his Spirit, from the corruption, dominion, and indwelling of sin—as “delivering us from the wrath to come,” to bestow upon us the fruition of blessedness in “eternal life.” They dwelt with hallowed pleasure, and with more than human fervour and power, on the nature of Christ’s satisfaction, the benefits of his redemption, the conditions of his salvation, the freeness of his grace, and the perfection of his work in the soul of man. Those who examine the apostolic sermons and epistles, must perceive that the atonement was the centre of their theology, the focus of their preaching. As Christ was the theme of their discourse, as He was the centre to which all their preaching pointed, I may be allowed to say, that “the cross of Christ” was *the centre of their preaching Christ*. They spoke as men deeply convinced that “without shedding of blood is no remission”—that, nevertheless, “it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins”—that “the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God,” was the only sacrifice for human guilt. They entered into the sentiment so well expressed in one of our hymns, respecting the inefficacy of every other sacrifice but that of Christ, to reconcile sinners to God :—

“ Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away our stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away ;
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood, than they.”

Hence they gave that prominence to this fundamental doctrine which its importance demands. "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, *and him crucified*," writes St. Paul to the Corinthians. And to the churches of Galatia, he says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in *the cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ." That there was a necessity for thus preaching the Cross is quite obvious; for if Christ made peace by his cross between offending man and his righteous God, *the death of Christ*—his death as the meritorious cause of our salvation,—must be the object of our faith and trust. The sinner, groaning under his load of guilt, must not look to the life of Christ in the flesh as that which has merited redemption for fallen man, but to his *vicarious death*; he must look on Christ as "wounded for his transgressions and bruised for his iniquities," as "delivered for his offences, and raised again for his justification." Well has John Bunyan, in his inimitable "Pilgrim's Progress," represented the Christian as carrying his burden till he came to the cross, and losing it the moment he beheld that object. Sinner, you will go mourning all your days, unless you get a believing glimpse of Christ crucified for you; but one confiding look of faith on the Cross will loose you from the ponderous load of a "multitude of sins."

The apostles preached Christ as "the Lord," besides illustrating the nature of his redemption, and proving the truth of his Messiahship. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." He was named by the prophets, "the Lord our righteousness." John the Baptist was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." St. Peter, in his discourse to Cornelius and his friends, said, "he is Lord of All;" and St. Paul makes mention of the princes of this world having "crucified the Lord of glory." They declared Christ to be Lord in two senses. *First*, as the Lord God, who is over all, blessed for ever—

creating, and upholding all things by the word of his power—"being in the form," possessing the nature, exercising the attributes of "the Most High God." Alluding to His absolute, divine, universal sovereignty, which He had before the world was, St. Paul says, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." *Second*, as the Man Christ Jesus, who, by virtue of his mediatorial acts, is exalted "far above all principality and power," and is "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. "For to this end, Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool." Because he hath "humbled himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name : that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." And, as our conquering Lord, "he must reign, until he hath put all enemies under his feet."

We now perceive, my brethren, that the apostles preached "Christ Jesus the Lord," in every particular, and as a whole, for the hope of guilty men. And, did time permit, we might very properly—and very profitably too—proceed to show that they preached him in all his offices ; as a Prophet, to instruct us ; a Priest, to propitiate and intercede with God for us ; and as a King, to set up his gracious kingdom in our hearts.

But we must proceed very briefly to remark, as a *second* particular in which they preached Christ Jesus the Lord, that they held him forth as the Being who gave success to their ministry, making it mighty through

God to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan. It was in giving efficiency to their word, that he signally demonstrated his lordship. Before he rose to Heaven, he commissioned his apostles to publish repentance and remission of sins, in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. He assured them that "all power was given unto him in heaven and in earth;" and, to strengthen their confidence in their evangelical mission and success, he said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." He also apprised them of the signs and wonders which should follow, and the success which should accompany, the publication of a Saviour's name. "These signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Charged with such a great commission, inspired by the hope of great spiritual success, confident that they should wield the mighty power of God, they zealously applied themselves to their undertaking; and, whilst their Gospel proved the power of God unto salvation to all them that believed, they faithfully attributed their mighty works and ministerial success to the power of their great Master. Did the Holy Ghost descend on the day of Pentecost, enabling them to speak with other tongues, and amazed the devout Jews of all nations? Peter ascribed that Pentecostal effusion to Christ. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, *He* hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." Were numbers converted under their preaching? "The *Lord* added to the church daily such as should be saved." When numbers believed in consequence of Peter's having raised the impotent man to strength, did the rulers of the people lay hands on them, and set them before the council, demanding, "By what

power, and by what name, have ye done this ?” Peter replied, “ Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by *the name* of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even *by him* doth this man stand here before you whole.” “The wisdom of man” was not the power which brought sinners to God ; the eloquence of the preacher—and where was greater eloquence than that of Apollos ?—did not persuade rebellious man to be reconciled to his Maker ; the profound learning and acute reasoning of the minister—and in whose discourses shall we find these more illustriously displayed than in St. Paul’s ?—did not raise dead sinners. There was ever a potency, distinct from the qualifications of the minister—a power always associated with the good tidings of a Saviour’s name—which gave efficacy to the word they administered ; and which made the weakest instruments, even a few unlettered fishermen, able “ to confound the things which are mighty,” achieving what all the philosophy of the world had failed to effect. Contemplating the sacred trust committed to them, the success with which God crowned their labours, and the work which yet remained for them to do, they might exclaim, “ Who is sufficient for these things ?” But, knowing that by the power of Christ promised to them they could do all things, they could say, “ Our sufficiency is of God.” It was the name of Jesus—that name which “ charms the hosts above”—that name which inspires devils, who have dared the thunderbolts of Jehovah, with terror—that name which “ charms our fears”—that was the moral lever to raise a prostrate world to God, happiness, and heaven. “ The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom : But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

Here, then, brethren, we have found the pith, the substance, the absorbing topic of apostolic preaching—"Christ Jesus the Lord." They displayed him to the world as the Messiah, promised in Paradise, written of by Moses, announced by the Prophets, fore-run by John, heralded by angel-choirs; they set him forth as Jesus, whose cross and passion were prefigured by the serpent in the wilderness, whose vicarious suffering was typified by the blood of Jewish sacrifices for more than two thousand years before his manifestation in the flesh; they represented him as the Lord of All, whose we are by virtue of his redeeming acts, who will subdue all things unto himself, destroying Sin, Death, and Hell, who will rule over all by his grace or by his power. And what position in the Church did they assume as their right? Not that of a master, but a servant:—"Ourselves your servants, for Jesus' sake." They "fed the flock of God," not "by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." As Joshua was the servant of Moses, voluntarily giving himself to that office—Elisha of Elijah,—so the apostles were the self-devoted servants of Jesus Christ." They gave "their own selves to the Lord," and then unto the church by "the will of God." They were "servants"—not for wealth, or honour, or authority,—but "for Jesus' sake." And although they were "free from all," no men having any right to treat them as slaves of their caprice, yet, for their Master's sake, they made themselves servants of all, and cheerfully ministered unto the saints. St. Paul observes, "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law

to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak : I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." Besides accommodating themselves to all capacities, and to every peculiarity of human character, they laboured incessantly for the advantage of those who were their children in the Lord ; endured every kind of hardship, and peril, and persecution, in defence of the gospel ; and counted not their lives dear unto them, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus. In connexion with our text, the apostle alludes to the anxieties and sorrows they experienced in that which came upon them daily, " the care of all the churches." " We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; we are perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed ; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." " We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

Beloved hearers, such were the apostles—such was their preaching—such their station. They, and they only, who do likewise, are faithful ministers of Jesus Christ to the churches. It is not for us to sit in judgment upon those who call themselves apostles, who say they are ministers of Christ, and are not : it is not for us to judge another man's servant, for to his own master he standeth or falleth. We have but to admonish ourselves and you who hear us. God hath given you a rule to ascertain who are true prophets:—"By their fruits ye shall know them." By their holy life, by their laborious ministry, by their evangelical preaching, by their success in saving souls. To this standard we must submit to be brought. If we are not "holy in all manner of conversation"—if we are not instant in sea-

son and out of season, to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine"—if ours is any other gospel than that preached by the apostles of our Lord—if God do not use us in building up his church, we are "*accursed*," and well would it have been for us had we never been born. If we have coveted any man's gold, or silver, or apparel—if we have made a gain of you, "seeking our own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's"—if we have used the "*enticing words of man's wisdom*," softening the severe truths of God's word, to acquire a pitiable popularity—if we have *desired anything but to save souls*, we "must suffer the vengeance of eternal fire." But, beloved hearers, we trust we have a good conscience, "in all things willing to live honestly." Unto us who are less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that we should preach unto you the unsearchable riches of Christ. We have been mindful to declare unto you the whole counsel of God, and "kept back nothing that could be profitable unto you." According to our ability, and the measure of the grace of God given unto us, we have "testified the gospel of the grace of God," enforcing upon all who have listened to us, "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." We have preached Christ to you, as promised, foretold, come in the flesh; we have preached Jesus to you, as "crucified in your behalf;" we have preached "Christ Jesus the Lord," as your rightful owner, and your only Saviour. Being your servants for Jesus' sake, God is our record that we have been willing to spend and be spent for your salvation, "by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Seeing then, that Christ and his redemption have been proclaimed in your ears—that the success of our ministry is not dependent on our weak, though sincere, endeavours to save you, but on the mighty power of Christ, "what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel

of Christ?" If the Gospel of Christ is the grand and only saving instrumentality, and yet that does not melt you into contrition, are you not in danger of "hell-fire?" If you neglect the great salvation we offer you, how will you escape "the bitter pains of eternal death?" Must not our word be "the savour of life unto life," or "the savour of death unto death?" Why is it that the gospel does not awaken your slumbering consciences, and open your blind eyes? Why, O why, are you still dark amidst the blaze of Gospel-day? God's word is not powerless; it does not return unto him void, but accomplishes that which he pleases, and prospers in the thing whereunto he sends it. The spiritually blind see; the morally dead live; but why have you been five—ten—or twenty years, under its sound without being converted? Whilst your neighbour—your friend—your brother—your child, O hardened sinner, is saved by the Gospel, how is it that you are passed by? The apostle solves these appalling inquiries. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." If the Gospel we publish will not save you, it is not in consequence of the impotency of this agency, but because Satan has drawn a vail over the eyes of your understanding—because the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience works in your soul—because your heart is hardened by the deceitfulness of sin—because you are under the tyrant-yoke of the prince of the power of the air, and led captive by the devil at his will! May God take away the vail from your eyes, cast the strong man armed out of your soul, and emancipate you from the thralldom of Satan! Amen.

F I N I S.

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